

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-28 and 30-39 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, (i) paragraph 0033 of the application is amended to include the features of claim 2 (as originally filed), (ii) independent claim 1 is amended to include the features of claim 2 (as originally filed), (iii) claims 16, 28, 31, 35 and 39 are amended, (iv) claims 40-45 are added and (v) claims 2 and 30 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added by this Amendment, and this Amendment is supported fully by the Specification.

Applicant gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended to Applicants' representatives during the October 2006 telephone conversations regarding the Office Action (discussed below).

SUMMARY OF ACTION

The Office Action withdraws the previously indicated allowability of claims 1, 4-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24-26, 28, 35 and 39 in view of newly discovered references. The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24-27, 28, 35 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0160231 to Cole et al. and GB Patent No. 2,365,966 to Hodgkinson. The Office Action objects to claims 7, 13, 16, 18-20, 22, 23, 30 and 31 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicates that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Finally, the Office Action indicates that claims 32-34 and 36-38 are allowable.

AMENDMENT TO SPECIFICATION

During early October 2006, Applicants' representative contacted Examiner Webb regarding claim 2, the status of which was not indicated in the Office Action. Based on those conversations, Applicants understand that claim 2 would be otherwise allowable provided that such is supported in

the Specification. As discussed with Examiner Webb, Applicants have amended the Specification to explicitly include the features of dependent claim 2 as they appeared when claim 2 was originally filed. As such, no new matter is added by this Amendment.

New Claims 40-45

Newly added claims 40-45 incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 16, 18-20, 22 and 30 each of which depended directly from independent claim 1, and each of which were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Specifically, independent claim 40 combines the features of claims 1 and 16 (*i.e.*, is rewritten in independent form and includes all of the limitations of the base claim (claim 1) and the intervening claim (claim 16)), and each of claims 41-45 dependent therefrom. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that each of claims 40-45 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24-27, 28, 35 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0160231 to Cole et al. and GB Patent No. 2,365,966 to Hodgkinson. The rejection is respectfully traversed. The Office Action also objects to claims 7, 13, 16, 18-20, 22, 23, 30 and 31 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicates that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, the features of claim 2 (which claim, as discussed above, was indicated by Examiner Webb to be allowable provided the Specification was amended to explicitly include the features of claim 2 as they appeared when claim 2 was originally filed) have been incorporated into

independent claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. All claims depending from amended claim 1 should similarly be allowable. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of 1, 4-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 21 and 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as well as the objection to claims 7, 13, 16, 18-20, 22 and 23 is respectfully requested.

Rejected claims 28, 35 and 39 and objected to claims 30 and 31 do not depend from independent claim 1. Independent claim 28 has been amended to include the features of dependent claim 30 (which claim was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (claim 28) and any intervening claim (claim 30)). As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 28 is in condition for allowance and that all claims depending from amended claim 28 (*i.e.*, claim 31) should similarly be allowable.

Claim 35 has been amended to depend from claim 32 which claim was indicated to be allowable. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 35 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 39 has been amended to depend from claim 36 which claim was indicated to be allowable. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 39 is in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1349. If a fee is required for an extension of time under

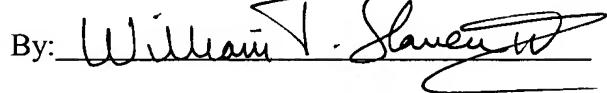
PATENT
Attorney Docket: 86581-0003
Application No. 10/717,921
Response to Office Action dated September 11, 2006

37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

HOGAN & HARTSON LLP

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By: 

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